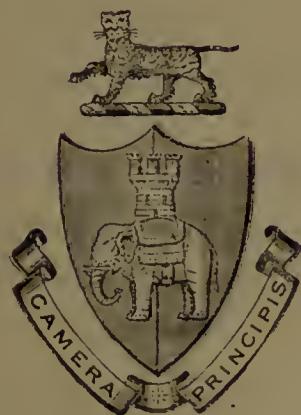


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# CITY OF COVENTRY.



## ANNUAL REPORT

OF THE

Medical Officer of Health

FOR THE YEAR

1940.

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## Summary of Vital Statistics.

No. of live Births registered :

	Males.	Females.	Total.	
(Legitimate)	1978	1843	3821	
(Illegitimate)	90	62	152	
	<hr/>	<hr/>	<hr/>	
	2068	1905	3973	= Birth rate of 16·4
No. of Stillbirths	92	67	161	—
„ „ Deaths	1767	1450	3217	= Death rate of 13·3
„ „ Marriages			3113	= Marriage rate of 25·7
Death Rate of Infants under one year per 1,000 births				63·0
Death Rate from Puerperal Causes	...	...	...	0·06
Death Rate from Principal Infectious Diseases			...	0·11
Respiratory Death Rate	...	...	...	1·44
Phthisis	„ „	...	...	0·72
Death Rate from other forms of Tuberculosis			...	0·12
Death Rate from Cancer	...	...	...	1·30
Maternal Mortality (per 1,000 births)			...	4·0

# CITY OF COVENTRY

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## Annual Health Report, 1940

BY THE

MEDICAL OFFICER OF HEALTH.

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To the Right Worshipful the Mayor, Aldermen  
and Councillors of the City of Coventry.

MR. MAYOR, LADIES AND GENTLEMEN,

I beg to submit herewith my Annual Report on the state of the public health in Coventry during 1940. As in the previous year the report is much attenuated due to war conditions.

No selection of words to describe the local events of last year can obviate an under-statement. Coventry was plunged into the front line of the war and was the first provincial town to experience the full brunt of enemy air raid technique. This occurred on the night of November 14th-15th, 1940, and was a culmination of many previous smaller raids on the city.

The emergency medical service, like the other local civil defence services, emerged well from the test. Although the casualty lists were heavy the situation was adequately met.

### Post Air Raid Epidemiology.

The public health considerations pursuant of the big raid were of first-class importance. Drainage and water communications suffered widespread damage, and, having in mind the possibilities of a typhoid outbreak, it appears that locally we lived on the edge of a volcano for a few weeks following mid-November. No outbreak did in fact occur. The escape was due to the immediate application of all preventive measures (among which the work of the Corporation Water Department must not be forgotten), the co-operation of the citizens in relation to these measures, and in part also, perhaps, to a slice of good fortune.

In the three weeks following the November raid, some 17,000 persons in the city were immunised against typhoid by inoculation. This represents about 7 per cent. of the "pre-blitz" population and about 10 per cent. of the population remaining in the city at the time. The conditions were such as to constitute an inducement to the public on behalf of immunisation, although the sharpest

stimulus, namely, the occurrence of actual typhoid cases, was fortunately absent. Opinions will differ as to whether in the circumstances the response was a reasonable one. Having in mind the lack of precedents in regard to mass anti-typhoid immunisation of civil populations in this country, I regard the response as not unsatisfactory. The main point is that facilities for personal protection were there to hand for those who were wise enough to embrace them.

The universal boiling of drinking water and milk and the chlorination of the public water supply were obvious preventive measures from the first. The orders as to boiling were relaxed at the year end; chlorination continues. During the current year (1941) there have also been occasions requiring the re-imposition of all anti-typhoid measures.

### **Shelter and Other Problems.**

The social and environmental problems of public air raid shelters have evoked wide publicity. But early misgivings as to their epidemiological results have so far proved unwarranted. It is indeed remarkable that, after two winters of black-out conditions and shelter life, the mental and physical health of the community should be maintained at so satisfactory a level. The findings, however, do not invite complacency, for we have far to travel yet. A complete local scheme is in operation whereby medical and nursing attention is available at all the larger public shelters.

### **Population.**

The Registrar-General's estimate of the mid-1940 population of Coventry is 229,500. The departmental estimate was 242,000. These estimates relate to a time anterior to the commencement of local air raids. A population figure for the year-end—following several substantial air raids locally—is difficult to compute. An immediate sequel of the big raid in November was a wholesale evacuation from the city both official and private. In addition to the "complete" evacuees there was a large number who continued to work in the city by day and to sleep elsewhere. By the year-end, however, the return flow of population had begun, for as damaged houses were repaired, the tenants promptly returned to occupy them. As mentioned in my school medical report, there has been much vacillation among local parents in regard to the evacuation of children. Local events in November last and since, surely indicate the need of a more general and sustained evacuation.

### **Vital Statistics.**

Based on the departmental mid-year estimate of population abovementioned, the city death rate in 1940 was 13.3 and the birth rate 16.4. The death rate figure for 1940 includes air raid fatalities. The infant mortality rate for the year under review was 63 per thousand births as compared with 54.6 in the previous year.

## **Infectious and Other Diseases.**

Notifications during 1940 included the following :—Diphtheria 224 (212), scarlet fever 408 (406), measles 584, whooping cough 129, acute primary pneumonia 234 (290), acute influenzal pneumonia 49 (56), puerperal pyrexia 45 (54), ophthalmia neonatorum 23 (16), typhoid and paratyphoid fever 23 (19), cerebro-spinal meningitis 46 (36), and acute anterior poliomyelitis 10 (2). The comparative figures in brackets are those for the last complete peace-time year, namely 1938. In the latter year measles and whooping cough were not notifiable, hence the omission of pre-war figures for those two diseases.

In regard to tuberculosis, there were 340 notifications (278 pulmonary and 62 non-pulmonary) during the year, as compared with 298 (231 pulmonary and 67 non-pulmonary) in the last complete pre-war year. At the end of 1940 there were 1,166 cases of the disease (all forms) on the local live register, and there were 114 Coventry cases under treatment in the Warwickshire and Coventry Joint Tuberculosis Committee's Sanatorium, Hertford Hill. To the latter institution 344 city cases were admitted during the year.

There were 316 deaths locally from cancer last year, giving a cancer death rate of 1.30 as against 1.09 in the previous year.

The 1940 returns of the venereal diseases treatment centre again do not indicate any increased local incidence due to war conditions.

## **Municipal Hospitals.**

In the City Isolation Hospital 739 patients were treated during 1940 as compared with 1,055 the previous year. Shortage of nursing staff continued to be a source of some embarrassment.

The Gulson Road Municipal General Hospital is perfectly organised as a "front line" war hospital. In pursuance of this policy, the hospital's maternity unit has been closed down on the present site and transferred to a suitable building in a nearby reception area. The hospital is a clearing-station for the "routine" sick and injured and also for air raid casualties. Cases are decanted daily to the affiliated outer base hospitals, and in this way the number of patients and staff subjected to air raid risks in the city is kept at the lowest possible level. This procedure is in accordance with the Ministry of Health E.M.S. Group Hospitals scheme which locally has worked smoothly and to the best public advantage.

## **Maternity and Child Welfare.**

The commencement of heavy raiding during the year under review led to the evacuation of a considerable number of expectant mothers, and certain of the city's municipal midwives were accordingly transferred to work in the prescribed reception areas. Cases dealt with by the municipal midwives within the city during the year nevertheless numbered 2,190 as compared with 2,174 the year before. The number of maternity cases dealt with in hospital during 1940 was 525.

The attendances at the city welfare centres during the year were 43,853 as compared with 56,650 in 1939 and 72,769 in 1938.

Reference was made in last year's report to the new demands for female labour in local war industries and to the related question of war-time nurseries. During the year a war-time nursery was duly established by the Department in a large house at 429, Foleshill Road. It is running successfully and will be the precursor of others. A further war-time nursery in the Stoke Green area is in fact about to be opened at the time of writing.

### **Sanitary Circumstances.**

Conditions of severe raiding have introduced important sanitation problems. The question of the disposal of excretal matter following heavy damage to sewerage and drainage communications, for example, has allotted an important additional task to the sanitary inspectors who have worked in the closest collaboration with the technical staff of the City Engineer's Department in this matter.

### **Reconstruction and Public Health.**

In a "blitzed" city there are intriguing problems of planning and reconstruction ahead. In Coventry, the damage to houses has often been heavy in areas which in normal times would be the subject of slum-clearing measures, and in this connection the raids have, in fact, given a unique opportunity for post-war replanning on healthy lines. In any scheme of general reconstruction, a chain of health centres and a new general hospital, sited peripherally, should certainly be included. Wide streets and open spaces have an obvious relationship with the public health.

### **Conclusion.**

Big demands were again made upon all members of my staff—medical, nursing, clerical, inspectorial, and all others—during a year of unprecedented pressure and anxiety, and I want to acknowledge with thanks the splendid way in which they all responded. There can be no such thing as "office hours" in the Department in war-time. The volume of additional work in connection with the civil defence casualty services alone would preclude. But everyone is, of course, more than willing to make the fullest contribution at this time.

It is a pleasure once more to record an appreciation of the valuable support given throughout the year by the Chairman and members of the Public Health Committee.

I am, Mr. Mayor, Ladies and Gentlemen,

Your obedient servant,

A. MASSEY,

The Council House,  
Coventry.

Medical Officer of Health.

August 20th, 1941.

VITAL STATISTICS OF CITY DURING 1940 AND PREVIOUS YEARS.

YEAR.	Population estimated to middle of each year.	BIRTHS.				TOTAL DEATHS REGISTERED IN THE CITY.			TRANSFERABLE DEATHS.			NETT DEATH BELONGING TO THE CITY.		
		Un- corrected Number.		Rate.	Number.	Rate.	Number.	Rate.	Number.	Rate.	Number.	Rate.	Number.	Rate.
		3	4											
1934	184,900	2585	2521	13.6	1865	10.0	125	116	144	57.1	1856	10.0		
1935	190,000	2843	2750	14.4	1852	9.7	120	112	128	46.5	1844	9.7		
1936	192,360	3009	2912	15.1	1960	10.1	100	101	151	51.8	1961	10.1		
1937	206,500	3306	3254	15.7	2154	10.4	126	128	158	48.5	2156	10.4		
1938	219,900	3724	3624	16.5	2074	9.4	139	156	203	56.0	2091	9.5		
1939	234,000	4155	—	17.7	2179	9.3	100	123	227	54.6	2208	9.4		
1940	242,000	3973	—	16.4	3157	13.0	288	298	248	63.0	3217	13.3		

## CAUSES OF AND AGES AT DEATH, YEAR 1940.

CAUSES OF DEATH.	All Ages.	Under 1 year.	1 and under 5.	5 and under 15.	15 and under 55,	45 and under 65.	65 and upwards.
1. Typhoid and para-typhoid Fevers ..	1	..	..	..	1	..	..
2. Cerebro-Spinal Fever ..	14	2	5	1	3	2	1
3. Scarlet Fever ..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..
4. Whooping Cough ..	2	2	..	..	..	..	..
5. Diphtheria ..	8	..	2	1	5	..	..
6. Tuberculosis of Respiratory System ..	174	..	..	..	110	59	5
7. Other forms of Tuberculosis ..	32	1	9	2	19	1	..
8. Syphilitic Diseases ..	18	..	..	1	3	10	4
9. Influenza ..	42	2	1	..	9	19	11
10. Measles ..	2	2	..	..	..	..	..
11. Acute Polio-myelitis and Polio-encephalitis ..	4	..	1	1	2	..	..
12. Acute Infantile Encephalitis ..	2	..	..	..	1	1	..
13. Cancer of buccal cavity and oesophagus (M), uterus (F) ..	44	..	..	..	4	21	19
14. Cancer of Stomach and Duodenum ..	56	..	..	..	1	26	29
15. Cancer of Breast ..	31	..	..	..	8	16	7
16. Cancer of all other sites ..	185	..	1	1	19	90	74
17. Diabetes ..	26	..	..	1	5	11	9
18. Intracranial Vascular Lesions ..	210	..	..	2	4	75	129
19. Heart Disease ..	649	..	..	..	44	180	425
20. Other diseases of Circulatory System ..	36	..	..	1	1	12	22
21. Bronchitis ..	173	5	2	..	7	47	112
22. Pneumonia ..	133	40	14	..	19	34	26
23. Other Respiratory Disorders ..	43	1	..	1	8	18	15
24. Ulcer of Stomach or Duodenum ..	38	..	..	..	9	19	10
25. Diarrhoea under 2 years ..	29	28	1	..	..	..	..
26. Appendicitis ..	12	..	..	3	7	1	1
27. Other digestive disorders ..	51	8	1	..	7	23	12
28. Nephritis ..	51	1	1	3	7	21	18
29. Puerperal and Post-abortion Sepsis ..	5	..	..	..	5	..	..
30. Other maternal causes ..	11	..	..	..	11	..	..
31. Premature Birth ..	63	63	..	..	..	..	..
32. Congenital malformations, Birth Injuries							
Infant Diseases ..	75	67	1	..	3	4	..
33. Suicide ..	31	..	..	..	12	12	7
34. Road Traffic Accidents ..	43	..	1	4	20	10	8
35. Other violent causes ..	717	13	27	63	337	183	94
36. All other causes ..	206	13	8	5	36	44	100
	<b>3217</b>	<b>248</b>	<b>76</b>	<b>94</b>	<b>722</b>	<b>939</b>	<b>1138</b>

CASES OF INFECTIOUS DISEASE NOTIFIED DURING THE YEAR 1940.

NOTIFICATIONS IN  
AGE GROUPS.  
WARDS OF THE CITY.

NOTIFIABLE DISEASE.

	Total number of cases notified.	Under 1	1 and under 5	5 and under 15	15 & under 25	25 & under 45	45 & under 65	65 & upwards.
Small-pox	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..
Cholera (C)	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..
Plague (P)	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..
Diphtheria (including Membranous Croup)	224	1	50	112	35	23	3	..
Erysipelas	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..
Scarlet fever	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..
Typhus fever	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..
Enteric fever	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..
Relapsing fever (R)	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..
Continued fever (C)	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..
Puerperal Pyrexia	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..
Cerebro-spinal Meningitis	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..
Acute Anterior Poliomyelitis	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..
Ophthalmia Neonatorum	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..
Respiratory Tuberculosis	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..
Other forms of Tuberculosis	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..
Malaria	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..
Dysentery	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..
Acute Primary Pneumonia	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..
Acute Influenza Pneumonia	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..
Acute Encephalitis Lethargica	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..
Acute Polio-Encephalitis	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..
Chicken Pox	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..
Measles	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..
Whooping Cough	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..
<b>Totals</b>	2202	94450	702350	37918641	84246107	9158114109	5420228858	6213287324186

Isolation Hospital or Hospitals, Sanatoria, etc.:—City Hospital and Pinley (Small Pox) Hospital, Coventry;  
Warwickshire King Edward VII. Memorial and other Sanatoria.

**Live Register of Tuberculosis Patients.**

	Pulmonary Cases.			Non-Pulmonary Cases.			Total Cases (All Forms).		
	M.	F.	Total	M.	F.	Total	M.	F.	Total
1. No. on Register at 31/12/1939...	567	372	939	99	108	207	666	480	1146
2. Cases notified (or otherwise coming to knowledge in 1940)	196	103	299	42	29	71	238	132	370
	763	475	1238	141	137	278	904	612	1516
3. Cases removed from Register in 1940 ... ... ...	185	113	298	26	26	52	211	139	350
4. No. on Register at 31/12/1940...	578	362	940	115	111	226	693	473	1166

## Vital Statistics. (Historical Summary).

Year.	Houses Inhabited (December)	Vacant.	Population (Mid-year)	Mortality	Infectious Mortality	Deaths under one year per 1000 born.	Birth Rate
1377	..	..	7,000	..	..	..	..
1586	..	..	6,502	..	..	..	..
1643	..	..	9,500	..	..	..	..
1694	..	..	6,711	..	..	..	..
1723	1,934	..	..	..	..	..	..
1748	2,066	..	12,817	..	..	..	..
1801	2,930	..	16,034	..	..	..	..
1811	3,448	*60	17,923	..	..	..	..
1821	3,729	*114	21,448	..	..	..	..
1831	5,444	*421	27,298	..	..	..	..
1841	6,531	*590	31,032	..	..	..	..
Ten Years' Average.							
1851	7,783	*151	36,812	27	..	..	..
1861	8,991	*1,026	40,936	25	..	..	..
1871	8,535	*816	37,670	22	..	..	..
1881	9,223	*643	42,111	20	3·3	150	35·4
1891	11,496	*284	52,724	18·5	1·7	142	32·0
1901	15,571	353	69,978	16·96	1·9	153·7	29·8
1911	23,515	95	106,349	13·7	1·4	109·3	28·0
1921	28,355	502†	128,157	11·3	0·7	83·6	23·2
1931	41,275	917†	167,083	10·1	0·2	67·7	15·7
1897	+12,440	73	61,234	16·8	1·8	157	31·3
1911	23,515	95	107,287	13·3	2·08	109·8	26·9
1912	24,590	50	111,166	11·9	1·35	76·1	26·4
1913	25,051	113	115,064	11·4	0·84	91·6	26·0
1914	25,860	99	119,003	11·7	0·70	84·6	26·9
1915	26,667	56	122,982	12·9	1·39	87·8	23·8
1916	27,366	12	127,089	10·9	1·23	87·5	23·5
1917	27,531	15	130,000	10·4	0·47	78·5	20·2
1918	27,735	25	133,000	14·6	0·42	92·5	20·7
1919	27,829	20	136,000	9·3	0·32	82·8	18·2
1920	27,973	48	130,000	9·8	0·35	76·0	25·0
1921	28,355	502†	128,157	10·2	0·25	79·3	22·1
1922	28,661	72	129,000	10·6	0·34	70·4	18·9
1923	29,414	40	130,500	9·3	0·20	64·9	16·9
1924	29,685	00	132,000	9·6	0·19	79·4	16·0
1925	30,199	83	133,500	10·6	0·30	77·1	16·3
1926	31,034	111	135,000	9·7	0·15	68·9	15·7
1927	32,260	151	139,000	10·2	0·23	63·4	14·8
1928	38,474	175	161,600°	9·6	0·34	65·7	14·4
1929	39,374	750	163,700	12·1	0·63	73·1	14·8
1930	40,519	800	165,800	10·1	0·32	57·0	14·5
1931	41,275	917	168,900	10·0	0·10	57·7	14·8
1932	45,781	1000	182,000°	9·4	0·33	69·7	13·5
1933	47,175	1000	184,500	9·9	0·21	64·5	13·4
1934	48,730	1500	184,900	10·0	0·17	57·1	13·6
1935	50,622	1854	190,000	9·7	0·16	46·5	14·4
1936	54,273	1361	192,360	10·1	0·20	51·8	15·1
1937	57,888	1606	206,000	10·4	0·18	48·5	15·7
1938	61,580	1316	129,900	9·5	0·13	56·0	16·5
1939	—	—	234,000	9·4	—	54·6	17·7
1940	—	—	242,000	13·3	0·11	63·0	16·4

\* This number includes all business offices, whether in dwelling houses or factories, not occupied on the night the Census was taken.

† This number omits all business offices, factories, etc.

‡ The Census returns show unoccupied "dwellings"—not houses.

° In these years an extension of the City Boundaries took place.

